

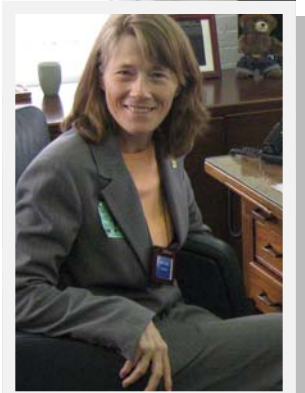
2012 ANNUAL REPORT

CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST



JULY WINDSTORM

- JULY 2ND WINDS
- EMERGENCY TEAMS
- SALVAGE SALES
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- LOOKING AHEAD



Darla Lenz
Forest Supervisor

NOTES FROM THE FOREST SUPERVISOR

Change starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning.

Arguably, the most dramatic changes on the Chippewa National Forest in the last year are due to the impacts of the July 2, 2012 windstorm. The wind and rain of this storm cut a long swath from Bemidji to Grand Rapids and seemed to follow Highway 2; right through the heart of the Chippewa. On the Forest, many roads and trails were blocked by downed trees, several campgrounds were affected, some structures were damaged, and much of Chippewa employee work for the last several months has been focused on storm recovery.

If I reflect back on my original quote, what ended with this storm? From a short term perspective, some of the things that seemed to end with this storm include the grand beauty of the tall pines lining the Norway Beach entrance road, some of the beautiful lakeside views that we take for granted, and for forest employees, the familiar assurance that our work was planned out and manageable.

The winds changed these things and more in some places on the forest. After the storm, visitors and employees alike expressed a sense of loss. For many of us, it may not be about the loss of a tree or even the loss of many trees. It is about changes to those places we love, where we have spent time with family and friends. A spot like Norway Beach represents joyful summertime memories for many. Other very special places on the Chippewa are also meaningful to generations of families and visitors. Some of us worried that the storm may have altered how visitors recreate in, enjoy, and create memories in spots like Norway Beach or South Pike Bay Campground.

If change finishes with a beginning, what began with this storm? This is the hopeful part of change. That beginning may look very different depending on your perspective. Out in the forest, that beginning may be a new generation of seedlings that finally have the sunlight they need. For Chippewa Forest employees, change means the beginning of a new workload that continues to focus on storm cleanup and recovery. This will continue into the future. For many returning visitors I hope this beginning means returning to a favorite spot on the forest, even though it may be changed. There you can experience the changes, mourn the loss, and then begin anew to create wonderful memories with family and friends on the Chippewa National Forest.

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O U R C H A N G E D F O R E S T



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TREE PLANTING

In April, 2012, the Natural Resources Club at the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) will reach another milestone of volunteer service. This will be the 30th year that 20-30 volunteers from UMC participate in a tree planting adventure on the Deer River Ranger District.

These dedicated volunteers (UMC students, faculty, staff and alumni) spend the last weekend in April planting seedlings with dibble bars and removing bud caps from saplings.

Since 1983, the UMC Natural Resources Club has planted about 170,000 seedlings in areas that have been logged on the Deer River Ranger District. Students receive hands-on experience with tree planting operations, that add experience to their resumes. The Chippewa accomplishes much-needed tree planting at a substantially-reduced cost while we share information about the Chippewa's natural resources, challenges, and job opportunities. This tradition continues to provide a valuable "win win" partnership between the UMC Natural Resources Club and the Chippewa National Forest.

FOREST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2012 CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

TIMBER

Harvested (Million Board Feet) 33,756
Reforestation (Acres) 2,741
Timber Stand Improvement 3,169
Fuelwood Permits 210
Christmas tree Permits 181
Bough Permits 41

HUMAN RESOURCES

Senior employment 12
Volunteers 146
Youth Conservation Corps 3
Full Time Employees 127
Summer Visitor Centers 10,679
Conservation Ed Programs 312

FIRE AND FUELS

Prescribed Burns (# Fires/Acres) 18/ 4,994
Wildfires (# Fires/Acres) 37/ 204
Hazardous Fuels Reduced (Acres) 2686
Hazardous Fuels (non-WFHF Acres) 6422

WILDLIFE

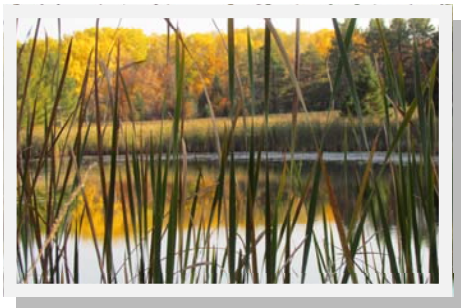
Hab Restore (Acres) 6900
Streams Enhanced (Miles) 25
Lakes Enhanced (Acres) 750
Soil RC Improved (Acres) 200

LANDS

Right Of Way Cases 0
Special Use Permits 600
Land Acquisition 0
Mineral Permits Issued 17
Nat'l Forest Acres 666,618
Boundary Mgmt (miles) 18

ROADS AND TRAILS

Road Maint (miles) 494.2
Road Improvement (miles) 10.6
Road Decommiss. (miles) 9
Trails to Standard (miles) 192
Acreage Within Boundary:
1,599,611



This was the driest and hottest year on record in Minnesota.

DROUGHT AND CLIMATE

One of the National Weather Service's Cooperative Stations is located at the Forest Service Northern Research Station in Grand Rapids, MN. Ninety-seven years of weather records show increased precipitation trends for nearly every month. Offsetting that trend are increasing temperature trends for each and every month of the year. The impacts of changes to the depth and timing in climatic changes could have wide ranging impacts on forest ecology.

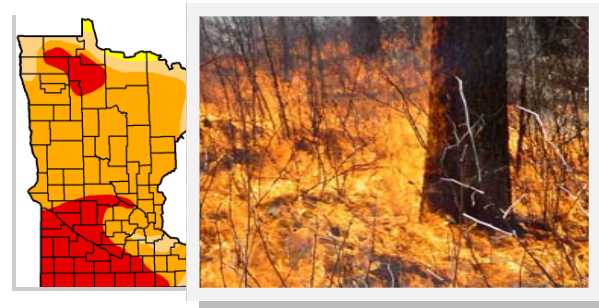
The 6 months preceding the July 2, 2012 blowdown show the second highest mean daily temperature on record. (The month of March was the warmest on record.) The blowdown area was experiencing a moderate drought from January through mid-April, with abnormally dry conditions from mid-April into June.



The Pike Bay and Cut Foot Experimental Forests were both designated in 1932.

EXPERIMENTAL FORESTS

The July 2nd 2012 windstorm had a severe impact on the Pike Bay Experimental Forest. The Pike Bay EF is home to several very long-term studies on forest management. Several of these experiments were located in the most heavily damaged areas. The Northern Research Station has worked to assess impact of the storm on these experiments. Researchers will determine what opportunities may be associated with the damaged experiments. In some cases, the original objectives are still valid. In other cases, the storm damage presents a chance to pursue new research questions. For instance, scientists believe that storms like the July 2nd event will increase in frequency over the next 50 years due to climate change. It is important to understand the impacts of such events on forests by measuring the type and amount of damage in forests of different species and ages. Removing the dead and damaged trees from more than just the most critical areas on the EF would preclude this line of research. As such, researchers will partner with the Forest and Leech Lake Band to continue work in the Experimental Forest.



January 2013 Drought maps shows severe drought on Forest.

FIRE AND RESCUE

Chippewa National Forest fire crews completed almost 5,000 acres of prescribed burning during the spring fire season. After that "average" spring, July 2012 topped out as the second warmest month in Minnesota's modern record, leading to high fire danger across Minnesota.

Forest firefighters responded to 37 wildfires on the Forest, but their largest role this summer came with the July windstorm. Fire crews responded immediately to the blowdown. These skilled crews have been key throughout the storm recovery. Work in the blowdown areas became priority, though engines were also sent to aid other agencies in the unprecedented fire season in northwestern Minnesota. In November, fire crews assisted in the Hurricane Sandy clean-up effort.

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OUR CHANGED FOREST

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

- The Forest Service wants to broaden the circle of conservation—to make a connection to underserved communities all across America, especially in our urban areas— building a workforce that reflects the face of America.
- The Forest Service has focused on improving the hiring, career advancement, and retention of women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans. Those efforts have helped shape our Cultural Transformation. In 2012, the Chippewa National Forest partnered with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Itasca Community College to hire individuals from the community as well as recruiting veterans, and job corps employees.

CASS LAKE STATION

On June 12, 2012, administration of the former Cass Lake Ranger Station was transferred from the USDA Forest Service to the Secretary of Interior to be held in trust for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO). The site is being used by the LLBO Public Safety (law enforcement) Department.

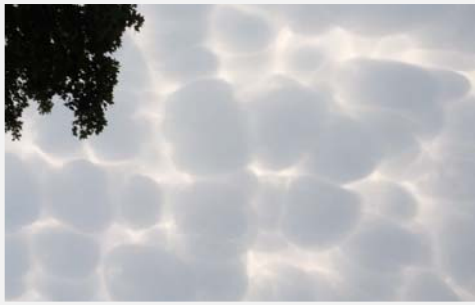


URBAN CONNECTIONS

The Forest Service Urban Connections program links urban audiences with the land, bridging the gap between the Chippewa National Forest and Minnesota's cities and towns. These connections help improve services to our urban constituents, increase their involvement in our work, and improve the conditions of the natural resources where they live. This is done in an integrated fashion, bringing the best of State and Private Forestry, Northern Research Station, and Minnesota's National Forests to the table. Here are highlights from this year:

- **Forest Service scientists shared the fascinating ways insects tolerate Minnesota's cold winter temperatures** and used this as a springboard to introduce the Emerald Ash Borer and the significant impact that invasive species are having on our rural and urban forests for youth from Denfeld High School in Duluth and Roosevelt and Patrick Henry High Schools in Minneapolis.
- **Urban Connections funded a summer naturalist** in partnership with **The Salvation Army Outdoors** program. The naturalist worked between Camp Northwoods, a Salvation Army Camp, and the Cut Foot Sioux Visitor Center, providing programs and activities for the youth camp and Forest visitors.
- **Four Hmong youth were part of a Youth Conservation Corps crew** that collected 15 gallons of acorns, treated acres for buckthorn removal, and helped 105 volunteers with restoration work.

JULY 2, 2012 WINDSTORM



Storm clouds on July 2nd, 2012 just before the storm

JULY 2ND

On Monday evening, July 2, 2012, a fast moving thunderstorm swept through the area causing windstorm damage that created a swath of blowdown over an area 10 miles wide and 40 miles long on the Chippewa National Forest. The storm tracked west to east following the Highway 2 corridor from Cass Lake to Deer River.

Winds were reported at 80 miles per hour and many people caught in the storm reported winds so loud that they didn't hear the trees breaking all around them. Many were shocked to step outside after the storm and see the trees snapped and down.



Fire crews worked to clear recreation areas through the night

1ST TEAMS IN

By 7:00 p.m., Emergency Response Teams were pulling together equipment and personnel to go in after the storm. Forest firefighter crews, law enforcement and engineers gathered to identify critical sites to clear. The highest priority immediately was campgrounds and special use permittee areas where people were unable to leave the sites due to fallen trees. Crews worked through the night, using chainsaws, hand tools and logging equipment to cut through the downed trees.

By 4:30 a.m., trees blocking campers at the Norway Beach Recreation Area had been cut through. Crews were relieved to find all campers doing well with only minor injuries. Chainsaw crews also completed work without injuries despite additional blowdown hazards.



Daylight brings the first view of the blowdown.

INCIDENT COMMAND

As roads were being cleared, employees were dispatched to conduct damage assessments to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, trails, facilities, and heritage sites as well as to lakeshores and to timber resources. Initial estimates of windstorm damaged acres on the national forest totaled 134,000 acres with 19,500 acres of moderate to severe blowdown damage.

With the campground visitors safely escorted out, Norway Beach, West Winnie, South Pike Bay and Tamarack campgrounds were closed by Forest Supervisor Order. The Migizi bike trail and Soo Line Trail were also closed due to blowdown damage.

Incident command pulled together work crews each morning to go over work plans and safety measures before heading out into storm damaged areas.

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OUR CHANGED FOREST



ROADS & SPECIAL USE

The blowdown swath impacted 334 miles of national forest system roads. After the immediate emergency response to clear roads, the Forest began to utilize hazard tree removal contracts to clear the right-of-way removing slash and decking and selling of merchantable trees .

One hundred four recreational residences and six resorts under special use permit to occupy and use national forest system land were also in the storm affected area. Some of the first priorities included opening and cleaning up the access to these areas. Special use permittees were relieved to find fire crews opening roads to cabins.



SALVAGE LOGGING

By September, 334 miles of roads had been cleared and salvage logging began at Norway Beach.

The Forest initiated a required 30-day public comment period for 15 salvage areas in early October with decisions planned for early November. Concurrently, the forest supervisor requested an emergency situation determination from the Chief for the majority of these areas, including approximately 2,200 acres and 41,000 ccf of pine and aspen salvage on 10 of the areas.

This determination was granted on November 8 and allowed the Forest to implement salvage sales for these areas immediately after decisions are signed.



NEXT STEPS

In April 2013, the last of the timber salvage sales from CE's was offered and sold on the Chippewa National Forest. This brings the total of timber volume offered and sold from salvage at 47,721 ccf. Good markets for pine and aspen continue to interest local loggers in salvage and several are utilizing the slash as biomass.

In the fall of 2012, a team of employees began work on the Blowdown Restoration Environmental Assessment, to be completed in 2013. All of this work helps the Forest recover from the blowdown by reducing fuels, reducing bark beetle habitat, accomplishing site preparation for future planting and promoting the utilization of merchantable wood products. A success for the Forest and for our local communities!

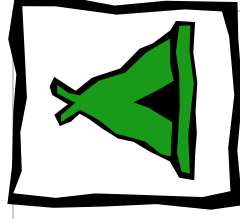
ANNUAL REPORT

O U R C H A N G E D F O R E S T

A WILD SEASONAL SUMMER

In 2012, the Forest was able to recruit and hire twelve students from the local community through the Student Temporary Employment program. For these seasonals, their new experience in their backyard also helped the Forest recover after the storm. Students became a link to the communities, providing information about the blowdown. The seasonal workforce of 2012 was critical to post-storm recovery, helping to assess storm damage, opening roads, recreation areas and ensuring visitor safety.

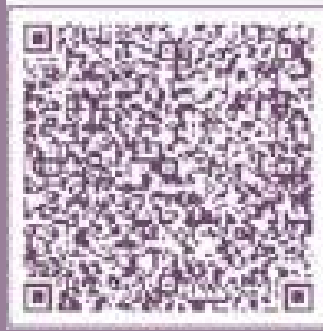
**CELEBRATE THE 80TH
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CAMPGROUND UPDATE

Many long-time visitors have called this winter to make sure their favorite campgrounds will be open summer 2013 season. Last year's July storm caused a number of campgrounds to close, some for just a few days, while others like Norway Beach were closed for the rest of the 2012 season. Thanks to the dedicated work of Forest recreation teams, fire crews, GIS and timber program managers, Norway Beach and South Pike Bay will be open for the summer along with the other developed campgrounds on the Forest.

Most campgrounds have both reservable and non-reservable sites. If you wish to make camping reservations, call 877-444-6777 or go online to www.ReserveUSA.com. Happy Camping!



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL
FOREST

LEARN MORE

Gather up some great Forest information by visiting our website at www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa

Our Forest frontliners are always happy to help answer your questions about Forest, recreation opportunities and resources. You can contact the Forest through these offices:

VISITOR CENTERS

Norway Beach Visitor Center staff are excited to open again for the 2013 summer season! Watch for naturalist programs and special events at Norway Beach and Cut Foot Sioux Visitor Centers and the Marcell Discovery Center!!

Forest Supervisor's Office
218-335-8658

Blakduck Ranger Station
218-835-4291

Deer River Ranger Station
218-246-2123

Walker Ranger Station
218-547-1044.

